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languages, of translating the subjunctives in the paradigms by *may* and *might*, as though these words were the usual English equivalents. Take up any grammar, Latin, Greek, French or German (I know of but few exceptions), and turning to the conjugations you are sure to find *amem, ich liebe, que j'aime, &c.*, rendered by *I may love*; going then to the illustrative exercises, it will be seen that no such translation is admissible in nine cases out of ten, but that a whole gamut of English meanings is demanded, running through nearly all the moods and tenses, these meanings being determined solely by the thought or construction of the sentence in the language studied. To young, untrained minds the intricacies of mood and tense are at best extremely difficult, if not inapprehensible for the most part; but how much more puzzling do they become, when we require the student to con his paradigms and attach to them a signification, which, when he comes to write his exercises, he finds does not hold good. The thing is so absurd, that I wonder it could have passed so long unquestioned. I have talked with some teachers of the elementary schools, who, while admitting the justice of my criticism, defended the practice on the ground that young students must learn to attach some meaning to all the forms of the verb, in order to distinguish the one from the other. But it seems to me tenfold more desirable that the forms should remain totally meaningless (which they virtually are, until they are put into sentences) than to give to them a meaning, which, in the majority of cases, has to be unlearned in practice.

The general notion of subjunctivity is one that is common to all languages, but each has its own peculiar way of treating the dependent clause. This notion is as clearly defined in English as elsewhere, but the use of the subjunctive having been reduced to a minimum, we are constrained to resort to numerous modes of expression to render the various shades of meaning of the moods of other languages. This being true, the only proper and reasonable method to pursue in our text-books is, to leave the dependent moods undefined and add a paragraph with numerous examples to illustrate their meaning in the vernacular.

The primary source of the erroneous prac-

tice here discussed is to be sought in the English grammars themselves, whose authors have been content to remain in the old ruts, repeating the inaccuracies of the first grammar-makers, who had no scientific knowledge of the language. In 1874, Noble Butler, in his *Practical and Critical Grammar of the English Language* (Louisville, J. P. Morton & Co.) had the courage to discard the so-called potential mood, asserting, as is beyond question, that *I may, can, or must learn* are not, in any sense, modally different from *I learn, or do learn*. But unfortunately, he allowed the enthusiasm of the reformer to get away with his better judgment, when he rejected likewise the subjunctive, whose logical existence and usage in English must be admitted, notwithstanding the paucity of its forms. Three years later, Prof. Whitney, in his most excellent little book, *Essentials of English Grammar*, (which should be taught in every school in the land), shows clearly that the forms above-mentioned are merely what he calls verb-phrases and not a distinct mood; but then in his paradigms he seems to think it necessary to defer to the common custom and admits them as a potential mood, which is to be regretted.

I may, can, must go differ in no wise from German *ich mag, kann, muss gehen*, as far as modality is concerned. They are indicative, if any thing, and should be so treated. Call them modal auxiliaries, if you will, but let it be understood and taught, that their form is indicative.

It seems to me that great good would be effected by eliminating from our text-books the faults above canvassed. Their retention is a patent error, which tends only to confuse young minds, and it is to be hoped that language-teachers of all grades and descriptions will turn their energies toward eradicating the evil.

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The Pardiso of Dante Alighieri. Edited with translation and notes by A. J. BUTLER, London, Macmillan, 1885.

Every lover of good literature must rejoice at any indications of a growing interest in the

greatest of Italian poets, in him whom Schelling calls the fountain-head of modern poetry. Within two years have appeared Sibbald's and Minchin's translations of the *Inferno* in *terza rima*, and Dean Plumptre, whose excellent translation of Sophocles is well known, is soon to publish a complete version, which we may not unlikely find superior to any rhymed version yet published, if the passages in his article in the *Contemporary Review* of a year or two since are specimens. Canon Farrar's lecture on Dante, whatever we may think of it, is sure to send many persons to Longfellow's or Cary's translation, and articles are becoming more frequent in the magazines and reviews. These are gratifying facts, all the more so, as nearly all the work done is creditable, and some of it excellent.

Those who are familiar with Mr. A. J. Butler's edition and prose translation of the *Purgatorio*, will heartily welcome the same gentleman's *Paradiso*. Mr. Butler shows in this volume the same excellencies that were so conspicuous in its predecessor; wide and careful reading, a judgment of his own, great love for his author, and good common sense, so necessary and so often absent in works of this kind. The book has a handsome page and a convenient arrangement: first the translation, then the Italian text, the variants and the notes. Of course, there is only a selection of various readings, but every reading is found there which is of importance to the ordinary reader.

In the constitution of the text he is wisely conservative; only once, so far as I have observed, has he admitted a reading which is not supported by at least some good authority. In IX, 21, he reads *Ch'è possa* for *Ch'io possa*, a reading, which to be sure makes the line easier, but does not so completely free the line from difficulty as to make it possible to accept it as a conjecture. A few conjectures are made in the notes, some of which are ingenious and plausible, and would be welcome if supported by any authority.

It would be strange indeed if all the notes should commend themselves to the judgment of everybody; for instance, what is the need of assuming a tmesis in XVIII, 11; compare Febrer's translation, where it is not possible, *Mas per la pensa, qui no pot refrir*. But in general, the notes are models of what notes

should be, and have in them many fruitful hints. The suggestion of Victorinus as possibly the *avvocato de'tempi cristiani*, X, 119, of the reading *Ricciardo* for *Rinsardo*, XVII, 46, the notes on XXIII, 11, 12; XXVI, 71, are examples of what I mean.

The chief objection to the notes is that there are not enough of them. In fact it is not easy to see for what class of readers the book is meant. Any one who could understand and get any profit from a note such as that on IX, 106-108, a good example of Mr. Butler's acuteness and common sense, would certainly not care for the literal prose translation which accompanies the text, and the ordinary reader would find Longfellow's translation fully as clear, almost as literal, and much more agreeable reading. His prose is sometimes more harsh than is natural or needful, as when, in the passage just mentioned, the natural antithesis between *di su* and *di giù*, "above" and "below," he renders "on high" and "below." Nor is it natural in English to speak of a rose, when not personified, as "she," even if the Italian is *ella*, XXII, 57. It would be an improvement, in my judgment, if the translation were left out altogether, and more notes were added, such as the editor could give and has given. But that is a matter between Mr. Butler and his publisher; no one will object to any publisher running any risk, which brings with it so many good things as this volume.

Mr. Butler is stronger on the literary and philosophical side of his task than on the philological side; at least it is hard to account otherwise for such a remark as this from the Glossary: "It is very doubtful whether Eng. *comb. G. kamm* has anything to do with Lat. *comere*."! So in the same sense it is very doubtful whether it would be safe to accept as literally true Livy's account of the foundation and early history of Rome. But the glossary is only of a few pages, and inasmuch as Mr. Butler has diligently consulted Diez, Littré and Skeat, even the Glossary can not fail to be useful to most of those who will use it, and the book itself can be most heartily recommended to all who wish to study the first great figure in modern times.

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